

Danny Casolaro vs the 'Octopus' Conspirators

*Suspicious
deaths
surrounding the
Inslaw case
have the
signature of a
secret network
whose mission it
is to subvert
truth and justice
at any cost.*

Part 2

by Kenn Thomas ©1996

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*Arriving just a few minutes before his flight, [Abbie] called me and started talking in a stream as soon as I picked up the phone: "This f***ing truck, this f***ing truck swerved; f***ing truck." I didn't get a chance to ask him what truck. Then, just as suddenly as he'd begun, his tone changed, grew quieter and conspiratorial: "Jack, don't believe anything you might hear on the radio or see in the newspapers tonight. Whatever it is, it's not true."*

(From *Run, Run, Run: The Lives of Abbie Hoffman*, by Jack Hoffman and Daniel Simon, a Jeremy Tarcher/Putnam Book, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1994, p. 336.)

Investigator Danny Casolaro uncovered a secret network whose sphere of influence extends over everything from computer software piracy to alien hardware conspiracy. In August 1991 he was found dead in a Martinsburg, West Virginia hotel, deep slashes cut in both wrists. Some dismissed his death as the suicide of a disillusioned writer. Others recognised it as a murder, committed as a result of something Casolaro had brushed up against in the course of his research into this cabal, which he called "the Octopus".

MYSTERIOUS INSLAW DEATHS

Danny Casolaro's main informant, Michael Riconosciuto, could claim a dark credibility from the fact that colleagues in his shadowy world continued to fall as Casolaro pursued his investigation.

An attorney from Philadelphia, Dennis Eisman—known as the "Fatal Vision lawyer" because of his involvement in the Jeffrey McDonald case—was in touch with Casolaro and was scheduled to travel to Washington to defend Riconosciuto, planning also to meet with a woman who had evidence of the threat to his client. In April 1991, Eisman was shot dead in his car in Philadelphia. According to one source, just prior to Eisman's death indictments were pending against him and other attorneys for narcotics trafficking and money laundering. The indictments never appeared.

As soon as Michael Riconosciuto found out that Eisman was dead, he called Virginia McCullough, a well-known conspiracy researcher who maintained contact with Casolaro. McCullough says that Riconosciuto was "absolutely panicky in jail". She says that Riconosciuto told her, "They've killed my attorney", and asked her to telephone another attorney, James Guthrie, who was working on his case, to warn him. McCullough did, and Guthrie told her, "I'm out of here."¹

On 1st April 1991, nine days after he issued his affidavit in the Inslaw case, Michael Riconosciuto was arrested by police on one count of distributing methamphetamine, manufactured at Lakebay in Washington state.

Investigators for the Intelligence Committee of the House of Representatives met with Riconosciuto in Tacoma, spent six hours taking depositions from him, and asked him for proof of his statements by way of legal documents. According to one report, Riconosciuto asked for clear "Lawyer-Client Privilege" labelling on documents when he called them in from his attorney, as a precaution against search and seizure by government agencies. Nevertheless, Riconosciuto's jailers opened the privileged packages and refused to forward them. Instead, the report goes on, they contacted the NSA (National Security Agency) which sent a team to review the material. By the end of December 1991, the Agency had still not commented on when the documents would be returned to Riconosciuto.²

Casolaro, who had been conferring with Riconosciuto regularly since late 1989, flew to

Tacoma for the trial and to act as a legal investigator for Riconosciuto for 10 days.³ Their meeting, and the fruitless search for the alleged tape-recording of Peter Videnieks—a Justice Department official who had threatened Riconosciuto on tape over the Inslaw case—may have contributed to a certain disillusionment that Casolaro began to feel about "Danger Man" by the time he returned home. "That guy is nuts," he stated to a journalist after his Washington trip.⁴ No such assessment of Riconosciuto's sanity was needed to determine that his statements were suspect.

In addition to life among the ufonauts, as documented in the last issue of NEXUS (vol. 3, no. 6), Riconosciuto failed to produce an oft-requested passport to corroborate his claimed trips to Iran. When asked by the CNN *Moneyline* program to describe Peter Videnieks—whom he claimed to have met on several occasions and to have been threatened by on the lost tape—Riconosciuto was unable to do so.⁵

On 19th June 1991, four days after Casolaro had an interview with Danger Man, former Nixon campaign aide Alan Michael May died in his home in San Francisco. During the interview, Riconosciuto had talked about May's involvement in the October Surprise. The coroner's initial report attributed May's death to heart attack, but an autopsy showed the presence of polypharmaceuticals in his body.

Anson Ng, a reporter for the *Financial Times* of London, pursued Jimmy Hughes—a guard with Area 51's Wackenhut security service who was central to the Alvarez murder case—to South America in an attempt to get an interview. While in Guatemala during July 1991, Ng was murdered by a single bullet to the chest. His death was ruled a suicide. The Guatemalan Government was asked to retrieve Ng's floppy discs and personal papers regarding his investigation. It did so and turned them over to a US intelligence agency. In a press conference a few weeks later, Senator Alan Cranston requested that these items be returned, but they never were.

More than a year earlier, on 31st March 1990, a British journalist named Jonathan Moyle was found dead, hung in a hotel room closet in Santiago, Chile. "Although Casolaro and Moyle were probing different leads, their investigations involved some of the same people," said columnist Jack Anderson.⁷ Moyle, an editor at London's *Defence Helicopter World*, had been investigating the weapons trade, specifically the alleged sale of non-military US helicopters to Iraq for refitting as attack choppers. The notes Moyle left behind contained reference to a sophisticated missile guidance system that held Iraqi interest, although whether or not Iraq used the system in its disastrous Scud attacks during the Persian Gulf War is unknown. Instrumental in the arms-dealing Moyle had been investigating was Carlos Cardoen, the same man Ari Ben-Menashe identified as the intermediary between Iraq and Earl Brian for the PROMIS software deal.⁸ Initial reports called Moyle's death a suicide, but evidence, including the presence of a strong sedative in his system and possible asphyxiation, suggested otherwise.⁹

It is unclear whether or not Moyle kept contact with Casolaro, although Casolaro's notes include references to Carlos Cardoen and the Iraqi missile deal. Casolaro knew about Alan May and he had also learned about Anson Ng's death shortly after it took place, while he was developing his Octopus thesis. He also remembered the January murder of Alan Standorf. Riconosciuto had introduced Standorf to Casolaro as an electronic intelligence operative of the NSA, working at the Vint Hill military installation in Virginia that gathered information from espionage satellites and other sources throughout the world. Casolaro agreed that Standorf had important information linking the Justice Department to parts of the various scandals he was researching. After Standorf's death, Casolaro mentioned to a friend, Bill Turner, that a key source had vanished.¹⁰

Did Casolaro feel the tentacles tightening? If so, it was not reflected in his research notes. He was collecting information on vicious killers and powerbrokers, but he gave no clue that he thought they were coming after him.

Over time, Michael Riconosciuto lost three lawyers and an investigator under what could be construed as mysterious circumstances. In February 1987 Larry Guerrin, a private investigator conducting Inslaw-connected work for Riconosciuto, was killed in Mason County, Washington. After Eisman's death, in April 1993 John Crawford, another attorney who worked with Riconosciuto, died suddenly of a heart attack in Tacoma.¹¹

The decomposed body of a third Riconosciuto lawyer, Paul Wilcher, was found in Wilcher's Washington, DC apartment on 23rd June 1993.

Wilcher had also been an attorney for the pilot Guenther Russbacher who claimed to have videotape proof and 16 witnesses to his having flown George Bush to one of the October Surprise meetings.¹² Wilcher belonged to the American Patriot Fax Network and had recently prepared an ambitious 155-page fax, summarising information on circumstances leading to the fiery deaths of David Koresh and his follow-

ers in April 1993, that he sent as a challenge to Attorney General Janet Reno. The fax included details of the story of his client, Russbacher, concerning the October Surprise, and a page of information on the Inslaw case, pointing out that an executive assistant to Senator Robert Byrd (Democrat, West Virginia), was the wife of Peter Videnieks who had threatened Riconosciuto.¹³

The mysterious death list also came to include the execution-style slaying of Ian Spiro, his wife and three daughters, in San Diego on 1st November 1992. Spiro reportedly worked for US and British intelligence agencies on operations that included the October Surprise, Iran-Contra and the hostage crisis in Lebanon. Spiro spoke with Riconosciuto, whom he was helping collect documents to present to a grand jury, only a few days before his death.¹⁴

Later, others would begin to develop lists of significant deaths related to the Inslaw case in much the same way. Many began making connections between the deaths of witnesses and others associated with the JFK assassination 25 years earlier. In addition to the Riconosciuto lawyers, the list included Vali Delahanty,

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whose knowledge of a DEA (Drug Enforcement Administration) plan to set up Riconosciuto on a drug charge would have made her an important witness for Riconosciuto. She disappeared on 18th August 1992, but her body was not discovered until the following April in a ravine near Lakebay, Washington.¹⁵ Another Riconosciuto ally, Pete Sandvigen, who was working to help Riconosciuto defend himself against the drug charges, died the following December, an ammo clip from his gun mysteriously missing.¹⁶

Barry Kusnick, a computer engineer who had also worked on PROMIS enhancements, also made the list. According to one report, Kusnick's enhancement was called "Brainstorm", an artificially intelligent program that applied the prognosticating ability of PROMIS to individual thought-patterns. It ostensibly allowed PROMIS to deduce from personality characteristics the potential action of the person being traced. As in the Inslaw case, Kusnick apparently made the modifications under a government contract, but the government failed to pay on it, attempting instead to drive Kusnick into bankruptcy. Kusnick had previously done communications and intelligence work for Northrop Corporation and the US military. His body has never been found, and, nine months after he was reported missing, family members were unable to get a known business partner to acknowledge knowing him. Five boxes of his belongings were found in a lock-up facility.¹⁷

Sherman Skolnick, long-time chairman of Chicago's Citizen's Committee to Clean Up the Courts, charged that nearly 40 witnesses in the Inslaw case had been murdered, and complained that a federal judge appointed to review the case failed to show concern over the safety of other witnesses. He also claimed that a Special Federal Grand Jury in Chicago planned to do an end-run around the judge and issue high-level indictments. Skolnick also reported that three of the grand jury witnesses joined with Riconosciuto to file suit against the judge for obstructing the indictments and for having witnesses interrogated by an FBI agent who himself was suspected of murdering Casolaro.¹⁸

To me, however, the most interesting of all the mysterious deaths connected to Inslaw was that of 1960s political activist Abbie Hoffman. Hoffman wrote an early piece on the October Surprise for *Playboy* magazine and shortly thereafter was involved in a suspicious automobile accident. Most regarded his death on 12th April 1989 as the suicide it was reported to be, due perhaps in part to the depression he suffered from the continuing pain resulting from that accident. Others, however, suspected foul play in Hoffman's death—notably, David Dellinger, a fellow member of the Chicago 8. Dellinger's suspicions even led him to attempt to retrieve the coroner's report for examination, but he was stopped by a threatened court battle. "They basically would not allow that to go to court," Dellinger concluded. "But [Abbie's son] Andrew and Abbie's first wife, Sheila, are convinced that he was killed."¹⁹

"CLARK GABLE"

Bill and Nancy Hamilton, owners of the Inslaw company and PROMIS software that Casolaro

was investigating, acquired another important informant and introduced him to Casolaro who started speaking with him regularly on the telephone.²⁰ This was Robert Booth Nichols, who, Casolaro said in his notes, "looks like Clark Gable".²¹ Nichols presented himself as a dashing, spy-like figure with connections to both the legal and illegal underworld, including the infamous Gambino crime family. He was also someone who had worked at the Cabazon reservation with Riconosciuto. Riconosciuto and Nichols formed a business partnership in the 1970s to manufacture fertiliser, pesticide and weaponry, including fuel-air explosives and the G-77, an inexpensive sub-machine-gun invented by Nichols, but the two had argued in 1984 and have not spoken since.²²

Nichols and Casolaro spoke on the phone 15 times in July—calls which lasted as long as two hours. They met in person at the Four Seasons Hotel in Washington, DC, on 10th July 1991. Casolaro was so impressed with the sophistication and 'insider' knowledge his new friend Nichols had that he also came to consider him a mentor. At one point, Casolaro spoke to him about his money troubles and Nichols offered financial assistance—in exchange for a 25 per cent interest in Casolaro's home and right of first refusal if he sold it.²³

To tempt a girlfriend, Wendy Weaver, into accompanying him to his meeting with Nichols at the Four Seasons, Casolaro described him as the president of the Bechtel Corporation who had just arrived from Kuwait. Nichols intimated at the dinner party that he was going to be named state security minister of the Caribbean island of Dominica, which would become a centre for rebuilding Kuwait. He also repeated his warnings to Casolaro that the matters the journalist was delving into were dangerous. Weaver recalls that Nichols warned Casolaro at least five times about the danger of associating with Riconosciuto, and that if Casolaro said anything that went against Nichols' former partner Riconosciuto, he would be killed. At one point during the evening, responding to a slight from another patron at the bar that Weaver later described as imagined, Nichols grabbed the man, slammed him against the wall and declared that he would kill him. Later that evening, Casolaro confided to Weaver that Nichols "really scared him". In his notes, Danny Casolaro characterised Nichols as "very powerful".²⁴

On another night, Casolaro and a different friend met Nichols at



Michael Riconosciuto

Clyde's in Tyson's Corner, Washington, DC. Nichols was again talking about Dominica, saying that he had just done a radio broadcast in his new position as minister of state security, and also that he was part of a CIA coup that was going to happen. Casolaro's friend claimed that Nichols "had this story that they were going to turn Dominica into a CIA base, had plans for a desalination program, and pulled out this design drawn by a French architect of a dome the size of Texas Stadium that was half underwater. Really, the whole thing reminded me of Ernst Stavro Blofeld..."

After dinner, Casolaro took his friend aside and showed him what he alleged was a summary of an FBI wiretap on Nichols that linked him to the Yakuza and the Gambino family. Casolaro's friend was shocked. "I said, 'Danny, I'm gonna take you out back and whip your ass! You just put me in a meeting with this man and didn't tell me what the hell...why didn't you tell me before?' And Danny was kind of, 'Oh, I don't know. I wanted to see how Nichols would react...'"²⁵

Danny Casolaro related Nichols' stories about Dominica in his notes: "Before the reins of the Octopus are turned over to several younger players, the game continues now—July 1991—on the tiny Caribbean island nation of Dominica. Possessing the largest boiling deep-water lake in the world, Dominica's geothermal potential is unmatched. It is here that the Octopus may be making its boldest and most dangerous move yet."²⁶

In 1976 Nichols represented a Saudi company, Ali & Fahd, in a failed attempt to acquire Howard Hughes' Summa Corporation after the death of the reclusive magnate. Joseph Cicippio, later taken as a hostage in Lebanon, was an employee of Ali & Fahd at the time, and has stated that Nichols represented himself as an agent for the US Government in the takeover bid. Cicippio said that Nichols showed him Justice Department identification, and had information which he assumed could only have been obtained through government contacts. Possession of such identification from the Justice Department suggests a possible link between Nichols and the original PROMIS double-dealings.²⁷

Casolaro learned more about Nichols from Richard Stavin, formerly a special prosecutor for the Justice Department's Organized Crime Strike Force who had some familiarity with the small-eared Gable's attachment to the mob-end of the entertainment industry. On 31st July 1991, Stavin explained to Casolaro the connections Nichols had to the Gambinos and the Yakuza, which the FBI had investigated in 1987 as part of its probe of Mafia presence in Hollywood. Stavin also mentioned that Nichols had at one time offered to become an informant for the Justice Department, although he did not know whether anyone had taken him up on the offer. Today, Stavin feels that passing this information on may have contributed to Casolaro's death.²⁸

The FBI's focus in 1987 was on mob influence in the motion picture industry, taking particular aim at Eugene Giaquinto, a member of the board of directors of Nichols' Meridian Arms, a firm that was to manufacture the G-77 gun in South Korea. At the

time, Giaquinto also served as president of the home entertainment sector of MCA, which owned Universal Pictures. In his application to wiretap Giaquinto, Agent Thomas G. Gates, who later supplied information to Casolaro, suggested that FBI investigative files indicated that in 1978 Nichols had been "an international money launderer for money generated through narcotics trafficking and organized crime activities."²⁹ The wiretaps caught Giaquinto and Nichols discussing a takeover of MCA, and revealed Giaquinto's connection to renowned mobster John Gotti. Although the investigation was derailed by members of the Reagan administration, Giaquinto left both MCA and Meridian, but not before unsuccessfully trying to secure an appointment for Nichols to head an industry anti-video-piracy operation in Asia.

Nichols denied any involvement with the Yakuza or the Mafia. "He traces the trouble to an FBI misunderstanding of his screenplay career. He says he was introduced to a high-level executive of MCA several years ago at a coffee shop. When the MCA man encouraged him to turn some tales he'd told him into screenplays, they became friends and, briefly, business associates. Unknown to him, the MCA man was the subject of a full-court-press FBI investigation for being a key organized-crime link to the entertainment industry. And so, Gable [i.e., Nichols] says his voice was picked up by taps on the MCA man's phone. The bureau misinterpreted their conversations as containing code words for illegal activities, turned around, targeted him, and slandered him to his business associates.

In fact, Gable's company is suing an FBI man for libel and slander. He says that the wiretap summary was part of the FBI man's affidavit in the Gable slander suit."³⁰

Nichols responded to an affidavit by Agent Gates, linking him to John Gotti and the Gambino family through Giaquinto by suing him and the US Government for libel—suits which were dismissed twice by federal courts. Gates said in testimony before the House Judiciary Committee that Nichols' attempts at payback may not have ceased: informants had twice told

him that Nichols had placed a contract on his life.

The other high point of Nichols' movie career came with his cameo appearance as a terrorist in the 1992 Steven Seagal movie, *Under Siege*. Perhaps not coincidentally, Seagal became embroiled in controversy when a writer, Alan Richman, claimed in *GQ* magazine that Seagal had appropriated details of the biographies of former associates Robert Strickland and Gary Goldman and passed them off as incidents in his own life. When investigator John Connolly later repeated the charges in *Spy* magazine and made further claims that Seagal tried to set up Richman in a fake homosexual tryst and tried to have Goldman killed, Seagal sued unsuccessfully.

In 1993 Nichols sought damages against the Los Angeles Police Department over an incident that caused the revocation of his concealed weapons permit and, consequently, a money pullout by Swiss financiers for manufacturing the G-77. According to his testimony, he had been thrown to the floor, disarmed, handcuffed and carted off to a North Hollywood jail by LAPD officers

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responding to a disturbance complaint at a club called The Palomino—another pale horse.³¹ Nichols said he was not involved in any disturbance but had only stopped in at the club for a couple of beers. Further testimony and legal documents reflected an impressive list of former business partners, including Howard Hughes cohort Robert Maheu and Texas oil magnate Clint Murchison.³²

Casolaro may not have understood the possible danger of possessing the information he had learned from Richard Stavin—that Nichols may have offered himself as a government stool-pigeon—or of mentioning what he knew to Nichols. If word of his association with the Mafia and the Yakuza did leak out during their conversation, he may have perceived such information as being very dangerous personally. Six days after talking to Stavin, Casolaro spoke again with Nichols. The following day, Casolaro informed Stavin that Nichols had warned him off the investigation. Apparently, this time the warning bothered Casolaro. If he did reveal to Nichols what he had learned, he may have portrayed the information as being unearthed by his own investigations, not Stavin's. At about the same time, he called FBI Agent Thomas Gates and asked whether he should take seriously Nichols' warning that, "If you continue this investigation, you will die." Despite this, Gates characterised Casolaro as "upbeat, not like a person contemplating suicide".

SEA CREATURE SURFACING

On 8th May 1991, the Inslaw case was overturned on second appeal, on the technicality that it should not have been tried in Bankruptcy Court. The ruling came on the day before the Justice Department would have had to release all of its software to the Hamiltons.³³ The Hamiltons asked the Supreme Court to hear the case in October.³⁴

In mid-June 1991, Danny Casolaro met with Jeff Steinberg, the Lyndon Larouche aide. Steinberg, who had earlier arranged the contact between the Hamiltons and Michael Riconosciuto, arranged this time for Casolaro to talk to an informant who went by the odd name of CHIPS—a former Customs agent who was now assisting the Treasury Department. Steinberg believes that CHIPS turned Casolaro's investigations further in the direction of Robert Booth Nichols and toward the Gambino Mafia family and drug trafficking.

Shortly thereafter, Casolaro made phone contact with E. Howard Hunt³⁵—a name that appeared on the 'A' list of many conspiracy researchers. Of late, Hunt had made a career writing

bad spy fiction, but his infamy stretched back to his role as one of the Watergate burglars and well before. Hunt had brought and lost a defamation case against accusations that he had been involved in the JFK assassination.³⁶ Like Fred Crisman, the associate of Riconosciuto's father, Hunt had been identified as one of the JFK railroad tramps,³⁷ and one former marine chum of Lee Harvey Oswald suggested that Hunt's role in the assassination involved brain implant technology.³⁸ Even without that distinction, Hunt certainly had been active in spook projects of the Kennedy era, most notably in the failed Bay of Pigs invasion. Even as Casolaro developed a "cordial, even effusive" relationship with Hunt,³⁹ he was taking notes.

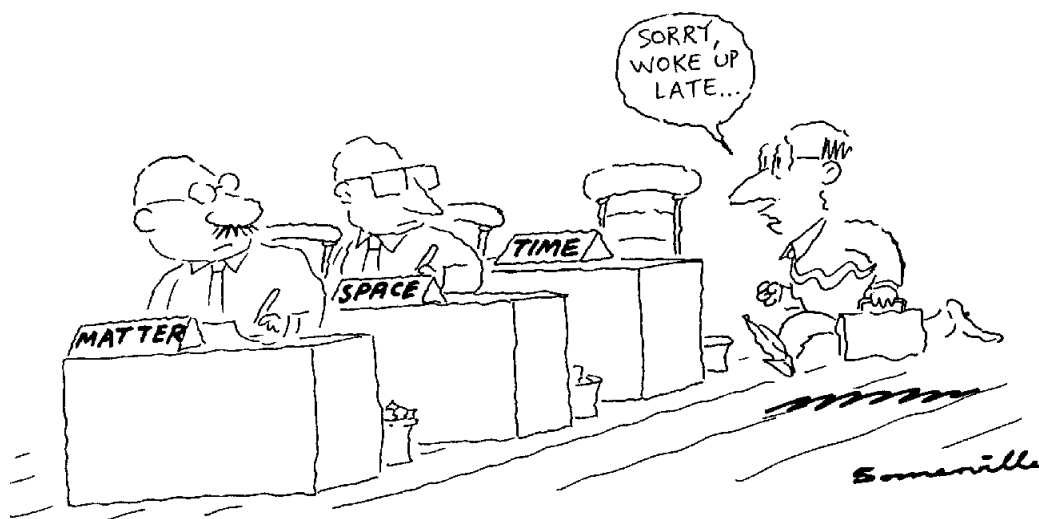
... Steinberg observed that by this time Casolaro had followed the trail of the Inslaw and related stories "back to a dirty CIA 'Old Boy' network" that had begun working together in the 1950s around covert operations in Albania.

In a memo, Steinberg observed that by this time Casolaro had followed the trail of the Inslaw and related stories "back to a dirty CIA 'Old Boy' network" that had begun working together in the 1950s around covert operations in Albania. These men had gotten into the illegal gun and drug trade back then and have continued in that business ever since.

Martin Killian, a Washington correspondent for *Der Spiegel*, also

spoke to Casolaro about the conspiratorial entity that Casolaro was by now calling "the Octopus"—a cabal which Casolaro believed had been started by CIA superspook James Jesus Angleton. Casolaro believed that the motive for creating the Octopus had been revenge for the notorious Albanian operation which had been compromised by Soviet mole Kim Philby.⁴⁰ Tony Casolaro said that his brother did not see the Octopus as a tightly-structured organisation. "He didn't envision them as a group like the Mafia. More as a network. They would overlap when their needs coincided."

The view reflected in Casolaro's notes was that "This is the Octopus whose defensive posture could reap havoc anywhere in the world. Indeed, what you will learn in this true crime narrative is a massive unraveling of modern history's most incredible puzzles."⁴¹



Endnotes

- ¹ Virginia McCullough, interviewed by Kenn Thomas, 27 January 1994.
- ² "The Com-12 Briefing", *Phoenix Liberator*, 23 March 1993, p. 20.
- ³(a) Ridgeway, James and Vaughan, Doug, "The Last Days of Danny Casolaro", *Village Voice*, 15 October 1991, p. 34;
- (b) "Worldwide Conspiracy or Fantasy?", *Seattle Times*, 29 August 1991.
- ⁴ Ridgeway and Vaughan, p. 35.
- ⁵ Brown, Colin, "CIA Computer Genius Alleges Massive Conspiracy", *Technical Consultant*, December 1990-January 1991, p. 7.
- ⁶ Anderson, Jack and Van Atta, Dale, "Another Casualty in the 'Octopus' Case", *Washington Post*, 28 August 1991.
- ⁷ Anderson and Van Atta, *ibid.*
- ⁸ Ben-Menashe, Ari, *Profits of War*, Sheridan Square, New York, 1992, p. 239, *passim*.
- ⁹ Dalrymple, James, "The Riddle of Room 1406", *The Sunday Times*, London, 30 December 1990.
- ¹⁰ Stich, Rodney, *Defrauding America*, Diablo Western Press, Alamo, California, 1993, p. 407.
- ¹¹ *ibid.*
- ¹² Guenther Russbacher, interviewed by Alex Horvat and Joe Palermo, 17 March 1993.
- ¹³ Wilcher, Paul, American Patriot Fax Network, fax, 21 May 1993, p. 69.
- ¹⁴ Thomas, Kenn, "Inslaw Revisited", *Steamshovel Press*, no. 9, Fall 1993, p. 44.
- ¹⁵ Stich, *ibid.*
- ¹⁶ *ibid.*
- ¹⁷ "Inslaw", *The Leading Edge*, p. 48 (undated).
- ¹⁸ Skolnick, Sherman, "Obstruction of Justice Charged in Inslaw Special Grand Jury in Chicago", privately published paper, 1993.
- ¹⁹ Thomas, Kenn, "King Co-Opted; Abbie Assassinated: An Interview with Dave Dellinger", *Steamshovel Press*, no. 9, Fall 1993, p. 7.

- ²⁰ Connolly, John, "Dead Right", *Spy*, January 1993. Writer John Connolly cast suspicion on the relationship between Bill Hamilton and Robert Booth Nichols: "...despite Hamilton's reservations about Nichols' character, the man who designed a program for tracking criminals and the man who has been linked by the FBI to two crime organizations communicate with surprising frequency. Last summer I visited Hamilton's office in Washington to get a copy of the phone records that would show his call to Nichols on August 9, 1991. He seemed reluctant. It took a fair amount of persuasion to convince him to turn it over—and what he gave me was a photocopy with all but that call blocked out. Shortly after leaving, I remembered that I had wanted to ask him something else and returned to his office. While I was waiting in the reception area, the phone rang. The receptionist buzzed Hamilton: 'Robert Booth Nichols, returning your call.' When I asked Hamilton about the call, he replied, 'I call Nichols all the time. It was just a coincidence that it was right after you left.'"
- ²¹ Gable "without the ears", Ridgeway and Vaughan, *ibid.*
- ²² Corn, David, "The Dark World of Danny Casolaro", *The Nation*, 28 October 1991.
- ²³ Ridgeway and Vaughan, p. 36.
- ²⁴(a) Connolly, *ibid.*;
- (b) Ridgeway and Vaughan, *ibid.*
- ²⁵ Rosenbaum, "The Strange Death of Danny Casolaro", *Vanity Fair*, vol. 54, December 1991.
- ²⁶ Casolaro's notes, pp. 1-7.
- ²⁷ From Casolaro's notes: "Sworn affidavit alleges that Nichols gets word from Justice Department."
- ²⁸ "Unanswered Questions on Casolaro", *The Spotlight*, 28 September 1992.
- ²⁹ Corn, *ibid.*
- ³⁰ Rosenbaum, p. 96.
- ³¹ From Casolaro's notes: "A Palomino is a Pale Horse."
- ³² Weinstein, Henry and Feldman, Paul, "Trial Offers Murky Peek into World of Intrigue", *Los Angeles*

Times, 21 March 1993.

- ³³ DiRienzo, "Shadow Justice", *Unclassified*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1991, p. 8.
- ³⁴ Linsalata, Phil, "The Octopus Files", *Columbia Journalism Review*, November-December 1991, p. 76.
- ³⁵ Ridgeway and Vaughan, p. 35.
- ³⁶ Lane, Mark, *Plausible Denial*, Thunder's Mouth, New York, 1992.
- ³⁷ Groden, Robert, *The Killing of a President*, Viking Studio Books, New York, 1993.
- ³⁸ Interview with Kerry Thornley, *Steamshovel Press*, no. 5, Summer 1992, p. 17. It should be noted that the medical examination of Danny Casolaro's body indicated a scar on his hairline. A year and a half before his death, a friend had found Casolaro with a bloody towel wrapped around his head. Casolaro claimed that barbells had hit him while he was exercising. Ridgeway and Vaughan suggested it might have been due to motor impairment caused by undiagnosed multiple sclerosis.
- ³⁹ Ridgeway and Vaughan, *ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ *ibid.*
- ⁴¹ Casolaro's notes.

This two-part article draws on material covered in the new book, *The Octopus: Secret Government and the Death of Danny Casolaro*, which is based on what was left of Casolaro's work as well as new research. Co-written by Kenn Thomas and Jim Keith, the book is available from Feral House, PO Box 3466, Portland, OR 97208, USA. Kenn Thomas publishes *Steamshovel Press*, a journal that regularly examines conspiracy theories. Single issues: US\$5.50 in USA; US\$6.50 foreign. Subscriptions: US\$22.00 in USA; US\$26.00 foreign. Send to *Steamshovel Press*, PO Box 23715, St Louis, MO 63121, USA. On the web, *Steamshovel* can be found at: <http://www.umsl.edu/~skthoma>